Ageing in the undergraduate Sociology curriculum
Current situation
Reviewed modules – core and elective – on 20 undergraduate programmes in Sociology (all RAE 4/5).

4 out of 20 had elective modules in ageing
No evidence for study of ageing – demographic/social/cultural/economic aspects – in remainder
Explanatory factors

- Marginalisation of ageing within sociology in the UK
- Absence of life course perspective
- Dominance of social welfare/social problem perspective
- Failure to link critical gerontology with critical sociology
Explanatory factors (cont)

- Lack of undergraduate tradition as in US (u/g degree – major and minor – in gerontology)
- Inter-disciplinary strengths in US – humanities, social sciences and natural sciences
- Strength of particular areas in US e.g. ethics, thanatology, human development, family studies.
Approaches

- Develop ideas about key elements in a module concerned with social ageing which draws on key sociological themes (e.g. the body, globalization, gender)

- Link together modules to form ‘concentrations’ of interest (see e.g. Case Western Reserve Health and Aging Concentration: Human Development/ Health Illness and Behaviour/ Sociology of Stress and Coping/ Sociology of Institutional Care/ The Life Course/Health care Delivery/ Aging in American Society
Gender – but not older women
Whither medical sociology
Workers but not retired
Family but dependants only
Bodies but not old bodies
Ageless migrants
Strategies for developing social science contribution to ageing:

+ work through professional bodies
+ textbooks (e.g. Giddens)
+ develop undergraduate curriculum where there are concentrations of social gerontological interests.
+ HEFCE Strategic Development Fund